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1975/04/22

Smyser

FLASH
DE WTE #0220 1121700
Z 221645Z APR 75
FM THE WHITE HOUSE

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

~~S E C R E T~~ NODIS VIA MARTIN CHANNELS WH50742

DELIVER IMMEDIATELY

TO: GRAHAM MARTIN
FROM: SECRETARY KISSINGER

1. THE JUDGMENT OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY HERE THIS MORNING IS THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE CAN BEGIN EFFECTIVELY INTERDICTING TAN SON NHUT AT ANY TIME. THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ALSO BELIEVES THE NORTH VIETNAMESE INTEND TO DO THIS WITH THE EXPRESS OBJECTIVE OF TRAPPING REMAINING AMERICANS AND HOLDING THEM HOSTAGE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN CONCESSIONS FROM THE UNITED STATES. THE LATTER IS NOT MY JUDGEMENT, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS.

2. WE NEED YOUR URGENT JUDGMENT ON THE FOLLOWING:

A. WHAT IS THE LAST MOMENT WHEN FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT (E.G., C-130'S) ARE LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO USE TAN SON NHUT?

B. AT WHAT POINT WILL THER BE TOO GREAT A RISK TO THE FINAL HELICOPTER LIFT?

C. WE UNDERSTAND AT LEAST TWO MORE SHIPS ARE HEADING UP THE RIVER TO SAIGON. HAVE THESE SHIPS BEEN REQUESTED FOR EVACUATION PURPOSES? IN ANY CASE, WHAT IS THE LATEST TIME THAT SHIPS COULD BE LOADED WITH EVACUEES AND TRANSIT SAFELY DOWN THE SAIGON RIVER INTO INTERNATIONAL WATERS?

3. WE ARE COUNTING ON YOU TO LET US KNOW WHEN THESE POINTS ARE REACHED, IN CASE WE NEED TO ACT QUICKLY.

4. TO SUM UP, WE NEED YOUR CAREFUL JUDGMENT AS TO HOW MUCH LONGER WE CAN SAFELY EVACUATE AMERICANS FROM VIETNAM, AND BY WHAT MEANS, IN LIGHT OF NORTH VIETNAMESE CAPABILITY TO INTERDICT THE AIRPORT AT ANY TIME AND THEIR APPARENT INTENTION

************************WHSR COMMENT ********************

MCFARLANE,RODMAN (2)

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